

**An English Translation of Act V of Nicolas de Montreux's *La Sophonisbe* (1601)**

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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## Abstract

Translation is often essential for the spread of ideas across international borders. Until now, understanding of Nicolas de Montreux's *La Sophonisbe* (1601) has been confined to those who could read French. With the completion of this project, the number of people who have access to this classical piece of literature has increased exponentially. The play has been translated from the archaic French of the 1600's to the modern English. This translation will allow for new insights and inferences to be made by English-speaking readers interested in classical literature. The story of Sophonisba has many adaptations, and now, for the first time, Montreux's unique take is available to a much wider audience thanks to the combined efforts of those involved in this project.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Donald Gilman, whose mentorship has been invaluable in completing this translation and to my continued pursuit of understanding the French language.

I would also like to thank the other members who worked on this project, namely Adam Allen, Tucker Eckweiler, Matthew Gorham, and Kathryn Smith whose revisions aided immensely in producing a readable translation.

## Introduction

Setting out to translate Nicolas de Montreux's *La Sophonisbe* was no easy task. There were difficulties in translation and issues of clarity that needed to be addressed throughout the process of producing this translation. For instance, there were a multitude of archaic words that I had never encountered. For these I consulted Randle Cotgrave's 1611 French dictionary, compiled by Greg Lindahl. There were also many instances of strange sentence construction throughout the piece. Typically, French sentence structure complies strictly to the syntax of subject, verb and predicate, and therefore often parallels that of English. Montreux, however, often changed this structure so that the object preceded the verb, in order to preserve the rhyming couplets and meter, imitating the freer use of Latin syntax. In addition, many object pronouns were used and it was often necessary to identify an antecedent that was often difficult to find. Through a careful reading of the text, and with the help of Dr. Donald Gilman as well as the others working on this project who helped me to edit my translation, these issues were resolved. The result is the first English translation of one act of Montreux's dramatic adaptation of the Sophonisba story. Obviously, the rhyme scheme of the original French could not be preserved; however, every measure was taken to make the English text coherent and readable while staying true to the original meaning. Immediately following the side-by-side English-French translation are my compiled notes on the translation, which attempt to clarify certain ambiguities and note errors in the edition from which the translation was produced.

## ACTE V

MASSINISSE, SOPHONISBE, NOURRICE, DACEE,  
LELIUS, SCIPIO, SIPHAX

## MASSINISSE

O grands dieux, qu'ay-je fait ? Quelle tremblante  
Esclave de la honte, a mon ame contrainte ?  
Quel crime ay-je commis et quelle froide peur  
A rendu ma vertu sujette au deshonneur ?  
Quel indigne forfait, deshonorant ma vie  
Rend mon antique gloire à la honte asservie ?  
Quoy, d'avoir fait mourir ceste riche vertu,  
Faute d'avoir pour elle ardamment combatu,  
Sophonosibe la belle à qui je fis promesse,  
Lorsque le sort la fist butin de ma proësse,  
De ne permettre point qu'un Romain orgueilleux  
Triomphast quelque jour de son los glorieux,  
Et de mourir plustost, vaincu de courage,  
Que de la voir trainer languissante en servage !  
Ouy, je luy promis ! Elle en receut ma foy  
Et pendant aujourd'huy parjure je me voy,  
Inconstant, desloyal, et l'ame desloyalle  
Ne merite le nom glorieux de royalle.  
Puisque donc je n'ay peu ma promesse garder,  
Qu'on ne m'estime plus digne de commander  
Et qu'on ne pense plus trouver en Massinisse,  
Ennemy de la foy, aucun trait de justice,  
Aucune loyauté, l'ayant cruellement  
Rompue à celle-là qu'il aimoit ardamment.  
O pauvre Sophonisbe ! Infame mariage,

## ACT V

MASSINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NURSE, DACEA, LELIUS, SCIPIO,  
SIPHAX

## MASSINISSA

Oh Great Gods, what have I done? What trembling  
Slave of shame has overtaken my soul  
What crime have I committed and what cold fear  
Has rendered my virtue subject to dishonor?  
What unworthy crime, dishonoring my life,  
Makes my former glory the slave of shame?  
What, for having had this munificent virtue done away with,  
For not having ardently fought for her,  
The beautiful Sophonisba, whom I promised,  
When fate made her the spoil of my mettle,  
Not to allow an arrogant Roman  
To triumph someday over her glorious praise,  
And rather to die, with courage unvanquished,  
Than to see her forcibly taken, languishing in slavery  
Yes, I promised her! She received my faith.  
And today I see myself as perjurer,  
Inconstant, disloyal; and a deceitful soul  
Does not deserve the glorious name of being royal.  
Since I could not therefore keep my promise,  
Let them consider me no longer worthy to take command,  
And let them no longer think to find in Massinissa,  
Enemy of faith, any trace of justice,  
Or any loyalty, having it cruelly  
Torn asunder by her whom he ardently loved.  
Oh poor Sophonisba! Vile marriage,



Qui te fait tressaſſer en l'ardeur de ton âge,  
 En ta vive beauté et alors que les cieux  
 Estoyent de ton beau front chasteſtment amoureux.  
 O cruel Maſſiniſſe, ô deſloyal infame,  
 D'avoir laſſé mourir une ſi belle dame,  
 Une royne ſi ſage et dont le maſle cœur  
 Nous ouvre le chemin glorieux de l'honneur.  
 O miſerable roy, indigne qui te nomme  
 Amy de Scipion et de la fiere Rome,  
 Puisque ſans cœur, ſans foy, et ſans aucun amour  
 Ton œil injurieux regarde le beau jour,  
 Que tu n'imité<sup>1</sup> pas en valeur en conſtance  
 Ceux de qui tu as pris l'immortelle alliance,  
 Que tu manque<sup>2</sup> de cœur, ô fier et courageux !  
 En dépit de la mort ils paroiſſent aux cieux.  
 Cache-toy, pauvre roy, afin que la lumiere  
 Qu'on voit deſſus le ciel flamboyer ordinaire,  
 En decouvrant la terre aux yeux des animaux,  
 Ne decouvre ton crime et tes faits deſloyaux,  
 Ne decouvre ta honte et rende manifeſte  
 La crainte qui le ſuit comme un malheur funeſte,  
 Comme une froide rage et te rend meſpriſé  
 Pour avoir de la foy excellente abuſé.  
 O miſerable roy, ô cent fois plus heureuſe,  
 Sophoniſbe, qui meurs<sup>3</sup> aujourd'huy glorieuſe,  
 Brave, hautaine, et ſage et qui dans le cercueil  
 Te ris du deſhonneur qui engendre mon dueil.  
 O bienheureuſe royne ! O moy cent fois indigne  
 De jouyr en vivant de ta vertu divine,  
 De t'avoir pour eſpouſe et plus encor, hélas,  
 De t'avoir relaiſſée au funeſte trespas

Which cauſes your death in the fire of your youth,  
 In your vibrant beauty, and when the heavens  
 Were chaſtely enamored with your beautiful brow.  
 O cruel Maſſiniſſa, oh deceitful infamy  
 For having let ſuch a beautiful lady die,  
 A queen ſo wiſe and whoſe virile heart  
 Opens to us the glorious path of honor.  
 Oh miſerable king, unworthy to be named  
 Friend of Scipio and of proud Rome,  
 Since without heart, without faith, and without any love  
 Your abuſive eye watches the beautiful day,  
 Since you do not imitate in worthineſs or in ſteadfaſtneſs  
 Thoſe whoſe undying relationship you have taken up,  
 Since you are lacking in bravery, oh proud and courageous one!  
 In ſpite of death they appear in the heavens.  
 Hide yourſelf, poor king, ſo that the light  
 That one ſees blazing above the open ſky,  
 Upon diſcovering the earth with the eyes of animals,  
 Do not diſcloſe your crime and your treacherous deeds,  
 Do not diſcloſe your ſhame, and diſplay  
 The fear which follows as a mortal miſfortune,  
 Like a cold rage, and which renders you deſpiſed  
 For having abuſed your fervent faith.  
 Oh wretched king, oh one hundred times happier,  
 Is Sophoniſba, who today dies gloriously,  
 Courageous, proud, and wiſe, and who in the coffin  
 Laughs at your diſhonor which engenders my grief.  
 Oh bleſſed queen! Oh I am one hundred times unworthy  
 Of rejoicing in delight of your godly virtue,  
 Of having you as a wife and ſtill again, alas,  
 Of having relinquished you to mournful death

Sans t'y accompagner comme durant ta vie,  
 Avant que le trespas inhumain t'eust ravie  
 O royne vertueuse, en mourant<sup>4</sup> constamment  
 Tu vis<sup>5</sup> sainte eternelle au haut du firmament !  
 Et je meurs de regret és bras du vitupere,  
 Pour me voir surpassé en constance ordinaire,  
 En courage, en vertu d'une femme par honneur  
 De l'empire Affriquain et son plus cher bonheur.  
 O chetif que je suis, indigne qu'on regrette  
 Apres mon vif meschef ma miserable perte,  
 Indigne qu'on m'estime ayant laissé mourir  
 Ce qui pour sa vertu ne devoit point perir.  
 O royne que je plains, royne que je soupire,  
 Et en te regrettant, que saintement j'admire,  
 Que je prise, que j'aime et qui n'as point esté  
 D'aucune secondee en parfaite beauté,  
 Helas, tu ne vis plus ! Si fais ; tu vis encore,  
 Puisque divinement en la terre on t'honore.  
 Royne, tu ne vis plus, et cependant je vis  
 En la cruelle mort de mille aspres ennuis.  
 Royne, tu ne vis plus et pour estre sans ame,  
 Bienheureuse tu vis sous une froide lame.  
 Tu regne glorieuse, ayant vaincu le sort,  
 Ennemy de ton los, par ta hautaine mort  
 Et vaincu des Romains la furieuse rage,  
 Qui pensoyent s'honorer en ton triste servage.  
 O patron de constance, ô soleil de vertu,  
 Tu as la mort, l'envie, et le sort combatu  
 Et malgré ses cruels bourreaux de ta mémoire  
 Saintement arrivé au sejour de la gloire.  
 O bienheureux trespas, ô glorieuse fin

Without accompanying you there as your life endures.  
 Before cruel death had taken you away  
 Oh virtuous queen, while constantly dying,  
 You lived holy and eternally in the lofty firmaments!  
 And I die of regret in the arms of blame,  
 In order to see myself surpassed in expected steadfastness,  
 In courage, and in virtue by a wife  
 Honored by the African empire and by her dearest happiness.  
 Oh wretch that I am, unworthy that after my forceful crime,  
 One regrets my wretched loss,  
 Unworthy may I be deemed for having allowed to die  
 She who must not perish for her virtue.  
 Oh queen whom I bemoan, queen for whom I sigh,  
 And in losing you, whom I devoutly admire,  
 Whom I cherish, whom I love and who is second  
 To none in perfect beauty,  
 Alas, you live no longer! So be it; you still live,  
 Since on earth you are divinely adored.  
 Queen, you live no longer, and nevertheless I live  
 In the cruel death of a thousand sharp pains.  
 Queen, you live no longer and because you are without soul,  
 Happily you live in a cold tomb.  
 You reign gloriously, having conquered fate,  
 Enemy of your praise, by your haughty death,  
 And having conquered the furious rage of the Romans,  
 Who intend to honor themselves in your sad enslavement.  
 Oh patron of constancy, Oh sun of virtue,  
 You have battled death, desire, and fate  
 And despite its cruel executioners of your memory  
 You have devoutly come to the place of your glory.  
 Oh very happy death, Oh glorious end



Qui surmonte l'effort du fortuné destin,  
 Qui domte la fureur inhumaine des astres  
 Qui avoyent arrêté les inhumains desastres.  
 O que la mort est belle alors qu'elle nous rend  
 A l'immortalité qui sainte nous attend,  
 Et qui faisant mourir notre mortelle vie,  
 Fait vivre à tout jamais notre gloire infinie,  
 Nous faisant estre dieux de mortels oppressez,  
 Et de mille douleurs mortellement froissez.  
 Tu as, ô belle roïne à jamais venerable,  
 Heureusement senti ce trespas secourable !  
 Tu as fini tes jours et en les finissant  
 Rendu ton saint renom à jamais florissant.  
 Tu repose au tombeau froidement enfermée,  
 Pendant que vit ta gloire à jamais renommée.  
 O celeste tombeau ! Que le foudre mortel  
 Ne descende jamais sur son front immortel.  
 Que tu ne sente<sup>6</sup> point l'orageuse disgrâce  
 Du temps injurieux qui toute chose efface.  
 Que le tin<sup>7</sup>, le laurier, et les heureuses fleurs  
 T'embasment à jamais en leurs douces odeurs.  
 Que les doux oisillons y chantent agréables,  
 Et que les noirs hybous te fuyent effroyables.  
 Vis tousjours, cher tombeau, ainsi que vit en los  
 Celle que tu enferme<sup>8</sup> en ton sacré repos.

[Sophonsibe, Nourrice, Dacee]

Sophonisbe

O jour, ô jour heureux, qui finissant ta course,  
 Tariras de mes pleurs la cristalline source,  
 Jour dont la pasle fin la mienne emportera,  
 Puisqu'avec ton declin Sophonsibe mourra,

Which overcomes the effort of fortunate destiny,  
 Which subdues the inhuman anger of the stars  
 Which had put an end to brutal disasters.  
 Oh how beautiful is death when it frees us  
 To the holy immortality which awaits us,  
 And which, bringing about the end of our mortal lives,  
 Causes our endless glory to endure forever,  
 Making us gods after having been oppressed by mortals,  
 And after having been dashed to death by a thousand sorrows.  
 You have, oh beautiful and forever venerable queen,  
 Fortunately felt this assuaging death!  
 You have ended your days and in doing so  
 Have caused your holy renown to blossom forever.  
 You rest, coldly buried in your tomb,  
 While your glory lives forever in renown.  
 O heavenly tomb ! May mortal lightning  
 Never descend upon your immortal brow.  
 May you no longer feel the tempestuous disgrace  
 Of painful moments which wipe away all.  
 May the laurel, and fragrance of happy flowers  
 Embalm you forever in their gentle aromas.  
 May the gentle small birds sing pleasantly there,  
 And may the black owls, terrified, shun you.  
 Endure forever, precious tomb, just as she  
 Whom you inter lives in your holy peace

[Sophonisba, Nurse, Dacea]

Sophonisba

Oh day, oh happy day, which running its course,  
 Will soak up my crystalline fountain of tears,  
 The day whose dusk will bring about my end,  
 Since with your passing away Sophonisba will die,

Tu sois le bienvenu, ô beau jour agreable,  
 Pour t'opposer au cours de mon sort miserable !  
 J'ay veu ton chaud lever qui parfaitement beau  
 Sembloit luire à l'honneur de mon divin tombeau  
 Et qui contoit aux cieux en ceste alme journee :  
 Sophonisbe verra sa peine terminee ;  
 Heureuse elle mourra, et l'heur de son cercueil  
 Des cruels ennemis fera naistre le dueil.  
 O beau jour, j'ay donc veu ton lever favorable,  
 Mais je ne verray pas ton coucher agreable.  
 Je mourray devant toy, et sus mon corps trancy  
 L'on te verra couché de frayeur obscurcy.  
 O beau jour, je t'honore ; ô jour, je te desire  
 Comme pouvant fuir mon angoisseux martire.  
 Je t'aime, je te louë, et m'affranchis par toy  
 Du servage Romain et de l'injuste loy  
 Qui permet aux vainqueurs de tenir asservie  
 La gloire des vaincus ou leur ravir la vie,  
 Loy cruelle de Mars, mais parmy les fureurs,  
 Parmy le tiede sang, le fer, et les horreurs,  
 Peut-l'on voir exercer quelque trait de justice,  
 Puisque la violence est nourrice du vice ?  
 Ne cherchons point de loy és cruautez de Mars,  
 Ny de juste pitié en ses cruels soldars.  
 Ils n'ont point d'autre loy que l'ardeur furieuse  
 De souller de butin leur ame injurieuse,  
 Ainsi qu'un feu cruel qui devore en son cours,  
 Etincellant d'ardeur, les orgueilleuses tours,  
 Les chambres, les parois, et les riches portiques  
 D'un superbe palais aux murailles antiques.  
 Du bois ce cruel feu, contre le fer ser pant,

May you be welcome, oh beautiful, agreeable day,  
 Because you impede the course of my wretched fate!  
 I beheld your rising warmth, and which, perfectly beautiful,  
 Seemed to shine and bestow honor on my divine tomb,  
 And which declared in the heavens on this gracious day:  
 Sophonisba will see her pain come to an end;  
 Happy will she die, and the time of her entombment  
 Will give birth to the grief of cruel enemies.  
 Oh beautiful day, I have therefore seen your favorable rising,  
 But I will not see your pleasant setting.  
 I shall die in front of you, and above my cold corpse  
 One will see you asleep, hidden from fright.  
 Oh beautiful day, I honor you; oh day, I desire you  
 As being able to make my martyr-like anguish flee.  
 I love you, I praise you, and by you I free myself  
 From Roman enslavement and from the unjust law  
 Which allows conquerors to hold enslaved  
 The glory of the conquered or to snatch away their lives,  
 Cruel law of Mars, but among the furors,  
 Among the warm blood, sword, and horrors,  
 Can one see some trace of justice practiced,  
 Since violence is the nurse of vice?  
 Let us not search for the law in Mars' cruelty,  
 Nor for rightful mercy among his cruel soldiers.  
 They do not have any other law than the furious ardor  
 Of defiling with spoils their injurious soul,  
 Just as a cruel fire devours in its time,  
 Sparking with ardor, arrogant towers,  
 Rooms, parlors, and rich porticos  
 Of a haughty palace with ancient walls.  
 It hotly kindles this cruel fire from wood,



Et les rudes cailloux, chaudement il esprent.  
 Bref, il consomme tout, ne laissant qu'une place  
 Hideuse, espouvantable, et cruelle à la face  
 Qui tesmoigne l'ardeur de ce feu devorant  
 Et qui de la terreur à l'œil superbe rend.  
 Ainsi Mars le cruel qui détruit toute chose  
 En sa vive fureur jamais ne se repose.  
 Il devore le droit, et la sainte équité  
 Sert de sanglante proie à sa rouge fierté.  
 O Mars injurieux, par ta fureur ma ville  
 Est d'un fier étranger cruellement servile,  
 Chetive, et misérable et son antique honneur  
 Enterré durement és cendres de son heur.  
 Tu as eu le pouvoir de détruire Cartage,  
 Mais non ma liberté, non mon brave courage  
 Qui malgré ta fureur braves, luisans, et forts  
 Dans le sacré tombeau accompagnent mon corps.  
 Comme je vescu libre et superbe d'audace,  
 En douce liberté heureuse je trespasse.  
 Libre fut mon séjour en ce monde impiteux  
 Et libre aussi sera mon tombeau glorieux.  
 Rome ne verra point en triomphe traînée  
 Sophonisbe qui fut à l'honneur destinée,  
 Et ce corps qui nasquit de nature Affriquain  
 N'aura pour son tombeau un sepulcre Romain.  
 De le nourrir, le soin l'Afrique voulut prendre ;  
 A l'Afrique ses os elle doit aussi rendre.  
 Rome, ne crois donc plus que ma captivité  
 Repare de ton los l'antique majesté.  
 Ne pense plus te voir glorieuse en ma perte,  
 Ny de mal affranchie en ma peine soufferte.

And the rough stones against the serpentine sword.  
 In sum, it consumes everything, leaving only a  
 Hideous, frightening and cruel place in the face  
 Which witnesses the burning of this voracious fire,  
 And which brings terror to the haughty eye.  
 Thus Mars the cruel one who brings ruin to all things  
 In his quick furor is never at rest.  
 He devours rights, and holy justice  
 Serves as a bloody prey to his burning pride.  
 Oh injurious Mars, by your fury my city  
 Is cruelly enslaved by a proud stranger,  
 Forlorn, and wretched, and its ancient honor  
 Buried harshly in the ashes of its fortune.  
 You had the power to destroy Carthage,  
 But not my liberty, nor my gallant courage  
 Which in spite of your fury bravely, glimmeringly, and strongly  
 Accompany my body into the sacred tomb.  
 As I lived free and full of boldness,  
 In gentle freedom I die happy.  
 Free was my stay in this pitiless world  
 And free also will be my glorious tomb.  
 Rome will not see dragged in triumph  
 Sophonisba who was destined for honor;  
 And this body which was born African  
 Will not have a Roman sepulcher for its tomb.  
 Africa wanted to take care of nourishing it;  
 To Africa she must render her bones.  
 Rome, no longer believe therefore that my captivity  
 Restores the ancient majesty of your glory.  
 Intend no longer to see yourself glorious in my loss,  
 Nor poorly set free in the pain that I suffer.

Sophonisbe est trop brave et ton pouvoir trop vain

Pour la rendre asservie à ton joug inhumain.

«L'esprit effeminé et l'infame courage

«Tous seuls en l'univers endurent le servage,

«Pour n'avoir le courage ou le cœur assez fort

«Pour regarder le front de la cruelle mort,

«Car tout royal esprit plustost change de place

«Que se voir enchainé, et serve son audace,

«Que se voir captivé et privé du repos

«Par l'ennemy cruel de son antique los.

O bienheureux trespas que pour fin de sa peine

Je propose ce jour à mon ame hautaine.

O genereux cercueil, de loger indomté

Un corps à qui le mal n'osta la liberté,

Je vous cherche et poursuis ; je vous aime et vous prise,

Comme mon temple saint d'agreable franchise.

O vase bienheureux où je contemple enclos

Le repos de ma vie et l'ardeur de mon los,

O breuvage sacré qui transissant ma vie

Transit pareillement le mal qui m'injurie.

O courtois Massinisse et digne d'estre roy,

Puisque tu m'as gardé immuable ta foy,

Je t'aime, je t'honore, et pour don agreable

Je reçois de ta main ce poison secourable.

O divine liqueur, en me faisant finir

Tu ravis de mes maux le cruel souvenir.

Tu me fais oublier et Carthage ruinee

Et la peur d'estre à Rome en triomphe trainee.

Tu me fais oublier le regret de tous ceux

Qui sont morts au salut du pays malencontreux.

Bref, tu me rens la vie et heureuse, contente

Sophonisba is too proud and your power too vain

To render her a slave to your inhuman yoke.

"Effeminate spirit and infamous bravery

"Endure slavery all alone in the universe,

"Because their heart and courage are not strong enough

"To look upon the brow of cruel death,

"For every royal spirit changes places

"Rather than sees itself enchained, and it serves its boldness,

"Rather than sees itself captive and deprived of peace

"By the cruel enemy of its ancient glory.

Oh happy death that in order to end her pain

I declare and offer this day to my exalted soul.

Oh generous coffin, untamed to harbor

A body from which evil did not withdraw liberty,

I look for and pursue you; I love you and I prize you,

As my holy temple of pleasant freedom.

Oh happy vessel where I, enclosed, muse

The respite of my life and the ardor of my praise,

Oh holy potion which sending my life away,

Similarly sends away the evil which hurts me.

Oh gracious Massinissa and one worthy to be king,

Since you have steadfastly kept your faith in me,

I love you, I honor you, and as a delightful gift

I receive from your hand this rescuing poison.

Oh divine potion, by ending my life

You snatch away the cruel memory of my pain.

You make me forgot both ruined Carthage

And the fear of being dragged in triumph in Rome.

You make me forget the regret of all those

Who have died for the well-being this unfortunate country.

In sum, you take me to a happy, contented life



En faisant tressailler ma vigueur languissante.  
 Je n'ay que trop vescu ; assez long de mes jours  
 Les sœurs<sup>9</sup> ont deuidé le miserable cours.  
 Je n'ay que trop regné et tantost importune,  
 Tantost douce et propice esprouvé la fortune.  
 Il est temps de mourir en ce mesme bonheur  
 Qui a jusques icy assisté mon honneur.  
 Il est temps de mourir et par ma mort heureuse  
 Tuer de l'ennemy la rage imperieuse,  
 Moissonner son espoir et le rendre exploré  
 En mon heureux trespas, digne d'estre honoré.  
 Le cruel a voulu ravir ma sainte gloire,  
 Et je luy veux ravir la cruelle victoire  
 Qu'il eseroit sur moy, le rendant du vainqueur,  
 Vaincu par mon trespas qui rend vif mon honneur.  
 «C'est rester vaincu que vaincre en sa deffaite  
 «Le superbe ennemy, auteur de nostre perte.  
 «C'est ne mourir jamais qu'acquérir en mourant  
 «Un renom qui nous va saintement honorant.  
 C'est l'heur de mon desir, c'est la butte où je vise,  
 Et c'est le seul trésor qu'en tressassant je prise.  
 Sus, nourrice, aide-moy ; au lieu de soupiner,  
 Viens mon masle tombeau de lauriers honorer.  
 Viens le couvrir de fleurs, et ne plains pas dolente  
 Le laict que tu donnas à ma bouche mourante,  
 Puisque tu as nourry un cœur qui genereux  
 Ne peut estre vaincu des hommes et des dieux.  
 Or sus, ne plore plus et celle ne regrette  
 Qui par sa douce mort le saint honneur acqueste.  
 Ne plore point mes ans, puisque leur douce fin  
 Fait mourir la rigueur de l'impitieux destin.

By extinguishing my languishing resolve.  
 I have only lived too much; the sisters have spun  
 The wretched course of my rather long life.  
 I have only reigned too long and fortune is seen sometimes  
 Unwelcome and sometimes gentle and gracious.  
 It is time to die in this same happiness  
 Which up until now has attended to my honor.  
 It is time to die and by my happy death,  
 To kill the enemy's proud rage,  
 To harvest his hope and to bring him to the point of weeping  
 In my happy death, worthy of being honored.  
 The cruel enemy has wished to rip away my saintly glory,  
 And I want to take away from them his cruel victory  
 Which he wished upon me, rendering him vanquished  
 By my death which renders my honor to be living.  
 "It is better to remain unconquered than to conquer the proud enemy,  
 "Source of our lost, in his defeat.  
 "It is better never to die than to acquire by dying  
 "A renown that divinely honors us.  
 It is the hour of my desire, it is the burial mound to which I aspire,  
 And it is the sole treasure that in dying I prize.  
 Arise, nurse, help me; instead of sighing,  
 Come honor my virile tomb with laurels.  
 Come cover it with flowers, and do not sorrowfully replenish  
 The milk that you gave my dying mouth,  
 Since you have fed a heart which, generous,  
 Cannot be vanquished by men or gods.  
 Now arise, cry no longer and do not regret her  
 Who by her gentle death acquires saintly honor.  
 Do not lament my years, since their gentle end  
 Kills the severity of merciless destiny.



Ne regrette mes jours, puisque la creuse lame  
 Les affranchist du joug mortellement infame.  
 Or ne plore donc point, et par un doux mourir  
 Laisse-moy doucement mes peines secourir.  
 Sus, donne-moy ce vase à mon bien necessaire,  
 Et me laisse aux grands dieux adresser ma priere :  
 Dieux auteurs de la loy et reconnus parfaits  
 Pour vanger des mortels les horribles forfaits,  
 Pour aider la vertu, pour estouffer le vice  
 Et maintenir l'honneur de la sainte justice,  
 Dieux auteurs de nos corps et qui guidez esprits  
 D'un sçavoir glorieux nos eternels esprits,  
 Dieux qui vangez le tort et de qui la puissance  
 Vange le sang espars de la sainte innocence,  
 O dieux, vangez le mien et ne permettez pas  
 Que le cruel Romain me conduise au trespas  
 Sans estre quelque jour chastié de son crime,  
 Qui pour estre superbe impuissans vous estime.  
 Vangez mon sang, vous dieux, et mon alme cité  
 Que l'insolent Romain prive de liberté.  
 Il sera fait ainsi ; or sus, mourons nourrice.  
 Baille-moy ce joyau en devot sacrifice.  
 Allons, ô Sophonisbe, avec un front joyeux  
 Offrir ta volonté aux debonnaire dieux.

Nourrice

Quoy, tu t'en vas mourir et je demeure en vie,  
 A mille fieres morts vivement asservie ?  
 O royne venerable, et quoy, tu vas mourir  
 Et par un saint trespas ta peine secourir ?  
 Tu vas dans le tombeau pour glorieuse y vivre,  
 Et pendant, ô douleur, je retarde à te suivre ?

Do not regret my days, since the hollow tomb  
 Frees them from the yoke that is mortally shameful.  
 Now do not therefore cry, and by a gentle death  
 Let me gently assuage my pain.  
 Arise, give me this vessel necessary for my well-being,  
 And allow me to address my prayer to the almighty gods:  
 Gods, creators of law and acknowledged as perfect  
 In order to avenge the frightful sins of mortals,  
 In order to aid virtue, to stifle vice  
 And to maintain the honor of holy justice,  
 Gods, creators of our bodies, and you souls, guided  
 By a glorious knowledge of our eternal spirits,  
 Gods, you who avenge wrong and whose power  
 Avenges the scattered blood of holy innocence,  
 O gods, you avenge mine and do not permit  
 The cruel Roman to lead me to death  
 Without someday being punished for his crime,  
 He who esteems you to be powerless in order to be proud.  
 Avenge my blood, you gods, and my dear city  
 That the contemptuous Roman deprives of freedom.  
 It will thus be done; now arise, let us die nurse.  
 Grant me this jewel in holy sacrifice.  
 Let us go, oh Sophonisba, with a joyous expression  
 To offer your heart to the fair gods.

Nurse

What, you go away to die and I remain alive,  
 Firmly enslaved to a thousand proud deaths?  
 Oh venerable queen, and what, you are going to die  
 And by a holy death to assuage your pain?  
 You are going into the tomb to live gloriously there,  
 And while, oh sadness, I delay in following you?

Tu veux mourir sans moy ; tu veux donc me quitter  
 Et par un petit mal un grand mal éviter ?  
 Ma royne, tu le veux. Si tu as cognoissance  
 Que depuis la tendreur de ta premiere enfance  
 J'ay tousjours demeuré vivante avecque toy,  
 Pourquoi veux-tu ce jour te separer de moy ?  
 Qui te fait me quitter ? Est-ce la palle crainte  
 Que je sois de frayeur en trespasant attainte ?  
 Est-ce pour me penser trop debile de cœur  
 Pour souffrir de la mort la mortelle fureur ?  
 Est-ce pour me penser trop foible de courage  
 Pour eschanger heureuse à la mort mon servage ?  
 Le crois-tu Sophonisbe ? Ah, bon Dieu, tu as tort  
 De penser que je vive encore apres ta mort !  
 Quand ma main ne seroit assez vive en puissance  
 Pour me faire mourir, ta perte et ton absence  
 Seroyent autant de morts qui me feroient perir,  
 Pour ne pouvoir sans toy m'empescher de mourir.  
 Non, non, je te veux suivre, et mon sang honorable  
 Sera riche tesmoin de mon amour loüable,  
 Car je ne vivray point pour voir d'un piteux œil,  
 Noyé de froides pleurs, ton celebre cercueil.  
 Je n'ay que trop vescu puisque je t'ay veu morte  
 Avant que la douleur dans le tombeau me porte ;  
 Je n'ay que trop vescu, puisqu'en mourant je voy  
 Ma royne trespasser dont vive fut la foy.  
 Mais, sus, qu'atten-je plus ? Si ta royne est sans vie,  
 Qui retient plus longtemps ta furieuse envie  
 De courir à la mort ? Or sus, nourrice meurs,  
 Et par un meme fer fais mourir tes malheurs.  
 De ce coup descens donc dans l'enfer effroyable,

You want to die without me; you want therefore to leave me  
 And, by a small evil, to avoid a greater evil?  
 My queen, you want to. If you have knowledge  
 That since the tenderness of your early childhood  
 I have always remained alive and steadfast by your side,  
 Why do you wish on this day to separate yourself from me?  
 Who is making you leave me? Is it the faint fear  
 That I fear upon dying?  
 Do you think me too feeble hearted  
 To suffer the mortal fury of death?  
 Do you think me too lacking in courage  
 To happily exchange my slavery for death?  
 Is this what you believe, Sophonisba? Oh, good God you are mistaken  
 To think that I will still live after your death!  
 When my hand would not be sufficiently alive and strong  
 To kill me; your loss and your absence  
 Would be as many deaths which would make me perish,  
 Not to be able to prevent my death without you.  
 No, no, I want to follow you, and my honorable blood  
 Will be a rich witness of my praiseworthy love,  
 For I will not live to see your celebrated coffin  
 With a merciful eye, drowned in cold tears,  
 I have only lived too long since I have seen you dead  
 Before sadness bears me into your tomb  
 I have only lived too long, since in dying I see pass away  
 My queen whose faith was alive.  
 But, arise, what more do I wait for? If your queen is dead,  
 She who no longer holds your furious desire  
 To run to death? Now arise, nurse die,  
 And by the same sword extinguish your sorrows.  
 From this blow descend therefore into the terror of hell,

De tes cruels travaux cruellement coupable.

Dacee

O superbe vertu, ô courage indomté !

O trespas glorieux, ô chere liberté,

Qui te conserve au rang de la plus brave dame

Que jamais le Soleil anima de sa flame !

O royne venerable ! O fait victorieux

Du pouvoir ennemy, du destin et des cieux.

O constance admirable ! O superbe victoire

Qui arrache à la mort ton immortelle gloire.

Roine, tu ne vis plus, et plus doux t'a esté

Le trespas de tes jours que de ta liberté.

Royne, tu ne vis plus ; avecque toy, unique

En celeste vertu, meurt la gloire d'Affrique.

Pendant que tu vescu, elle vescu aussi,

Et en ta fiere mort son pouvoir est transi.

Royne, tu ne vis plus ; ta main chaste et fidelle

S'est ouvert le chemin à la gloire immortelle

Où tu marche aujourd'huy, et ton amour pieux

Doit estre mis au rang des sacrez demy-dieux.

O rare Sophonisbe, en beauté sans semblable

Et en rare vertu aux vertus admirable.

O vertueuse royne ! O cœur d'homme parfait

Qui tousjours a haï le funeste forfait !

Tu es morte et n'es plus qu'une depouille chere,

Venerable à jamais, d'un tombeau mortuaire.

Hé, Dieu, tu ne vis plus, et je t'ay veu finir

Comme une belle fleur qu'on regarde fennir

Cruelly guilty of your cruel deeds.

Dacea

Oh proud virtue, oh indomitable courage!

Oh glorious death, oh precious liberty,

Which assures you a place as the most courageous lady

Whom the sun ever set aflame with life!

Oh venerable queen! Oh deed victorious

Over the enemy's power, of destiny and of the heavens.

Oh admirable steadfastness! Oh proud victory

Which snatches immortal glory at the time of your death.

Queen, you live no longer, and more gentle has been to you

The end of your days than that of your liberty.

Queen, you live no more; with you, only

In celestial virtue, does the glory of Africa die.

While you lived, Africa's glory lived also,

And in your proud death its power has passed away.

Queen, you live no longer; your chaste and faithful hand

Has opened the path to immortal glory

Where you walk today, and your pious love

Must be placed in the same regard as the holy demi-gods.

Oh excellent Sophonisba, in beauty unmatched

And in rare virtue admirable to virtue itself.

Oh virtuous queen! Oh heart of a perfect man

Who has always hated deadly crime!

You are dead and are no longer anything but a precious spoil of war,

Forever revered, from a funeral tomb.

Oh, God, you live no longer, and I have seen your life ended

Just as one watches a beautiful flower wither



Lorsque sur un pavé elle paroist gisante,  
 N'ayant plus sa beauté en œillets rougissante,  
 Ou comme on voit finir un soleil radieux  
 Qui peu à peu s'éclipse à nos superbes yeux,  
 S'allant plonger au fond de sa couche moiteuse  
 Et quittant le beau ciel à la nuit tenebreuse.  
 Tu es morte de mesme, ô royne dont le nom  
 S'est acquis en mourant un eternal renom.  
 Mais sus, je vois<sup>10</sup> parer ce beau corps, qui sans ame  
 S'en va estre butin d'une honorable flame  
 Et sembler à Didon<sup>11</sup>, dont l'essence il receut,  
 Qui fut l'honneur d'Affrique alors qu'elle vescu  
 Et qui pour conserver sa chasteté loüable  
 Esprouva la rigueur d'une flame honorable.  
 Or sus, je m'en vois donc preparer ce beau corps,  
 Puis chercher comme luy place parmy les morts.

[Lelius, Scipion, Siphax]

Lelius

O courageux esprit ! O divine constance !  
 O celeste vertu sans pair en excellence !  
 O d'effet et de nom princesse de vertu,  
 Puisque tu as le sort et le mal combatu !

Scipion

Lelie, qui a-t-il ? Quelle chose advenue  
 Et quel estrange fait rend ton ame esperdue ?

Lelius

La mort de Sophonisbe, excellente en valeur,

When on cobbled road it appears laid out,  
 Having lost its reddening beauty in its blossoms,  
 Or as one sees the radiant sun setting  
 Which little by little becomes eclipsed in our proud eyes,  
 Plunging to the depths of its moist bed  
 And leaving the beautiful sky to the dark night.  
 You are dead all the same, oh queen, whose name  
 Has acquired, in dying, an eternal renown.  
 But arise, I go to adorn this beautiful body, which, without soul,  
 Is borne away to be the spoil of an honorable flame  
 And is to seem like Dido, whose being it received,  
 Who was the honor of Africa when she lived  
 And who, in order to preserve her praiseworthy purity,  
 Felt the severity of an honorable flame.  
 Now arise, I go away therefore to prepare this fair body,  
 Then to search like him a place among the dead.

[Lelius, Scipio, Siphax]

Lelius

Oh courageous spirit! Oh divine constancy!  
 Oh celestial virtue in excellence unmatched!  
 Oh with efficacy and with the name princess of virtue,  
 Since you have battled fate and evil!

Scipio

Lelius, what is the matter? What has happened  
 And what harsh deed renders your soul so miserable?

Lelius

Sophonisba's death, extraordinary in courage,

Sans paroistre en mourant sentir quelque douleur.

Scipion

Sophonisbe est donc morte ? O perte déplorable !

Mais conte-nous un peu cet acte memorable.

Lelius

Tu sçais que Massinisse, ayant Siphax domté,

Espousa ceste royne, excellente en beauté,

Riche de fier courage et cruelle adversaire

En faits et en propos de Rome tutelaire.

Son langage de vœux et de pleurs animé

Avoit jà contre nous le roy Siphax armé,

Rendu nostre ennemy, et chaud en son courage

De venir au combat pour secourir Cartage,

Il y vint et fut pris et puny justement

Pour avoir envers nous violé son serment.

Massinisse le prist et d'une main semblable

Sophonisbe sa femme, aux Romains redoutable.

La crainte que tu eus que le langage doux

De cest royne peut oster d'avecque nous

Le vaillant Massinisse et le rendre adversaire,

Comme elle fist Siphax, de nostre main guerriere

Fut cause que je fus envoyé vers ce roy

Pour l'advertir tousjours de nous garder la foy,

Car l'amour outrageux d'une parfaite femme

La consume souvent en consommant nostre ame.

Or je le sus trouver de la sorte amoureux

Qu'il pensoit par l'amour seulement estre heureux,

Does not appear to feel any sorrow upon dying.

Scipio

Sophonisba is dead then? Oh grieving loss!

But tell us something of this unforgettable act

Lelius

You know that Massinissa, having overcome Siphax,

Married this superbly beautiful queen,

Rich in proud courage and cruel opponent

To ruling Rome in deeds and in words.

Her language moved by desire and tears

Had already armed King Siphax against us,

Had rendered him our enemy, and roused by his courage

To go into battle to aid Carthage,

He came and was taken and justly punished

For having broken his oath to us.

Massinissa captured him and with a similar hand

Took Sophonisba his wife, feared by the Romans.

Your fear, that the gentle language

Of this queen can take from us

The valiant Massinissa and make him our enemy,

As she did with Siphax with our warlike actions,

Was the reason that I was sent to this king

To advise him always to keep good faith with us,

For the outrageous love of a perfect woman

Often consumes her while consuming our soul.

Now I was able to find him, in love in such a way

That he intended to be happy through love alone,

Ne songeant plus en nous, ne parlant plus des armes,  
 Ny de marcher au bruit des sanglantes alarmes.  
 Il estoit comme Achil en plaisirs retenu  
 Et d'une belle femme esclave devenu.  
 D'un crime si vilain qui eternel demeure  
 S'il n'est esteint à coup je le repris à l'heure,  
 Demande Sophonisbe et la pretens butin  
 De Rome triomphante et du peuple Latin,  
 Et soustiens qu'il ne peut la retenir servile  
 Sans le juste congé de nostre heureuse ville.  
 Il conteste, il dispute, il remonstre comment  
 Il l'avoit fiancée et presté le serment  
 De la prendre pour femme avant sa foy promise  
 Au malheureux Siphax et avant qu'il l'eust prise.  
 Je dispute tousjours et soustiens qu'il ne peut  
 La retenir pour luy, si parjure il ne veut  
 En nous faussant la foy avoir pour adversaire  
 Rome, qu'il esprouva mille fois debonnaire,  
 Bien qu'on le vist de nous ardamment se douloir.  
 Il se resout pourtant de faire ton vouloir,  
 Me promet Sophonisbe, et j'avois esperance  
 De la voir en ce jour vive en nostre puissance.  
 Elle qui fut prudente avoit receu sa foy  
 En se donnant à luy, comme d'un sacré roy,  
 Qu'il ne la rendroit point en nostre pouvoir vive,  
 Pour ne vouloir se voir de nos armes captive.  
 Or il tient son serment, car se voyant contrainct

Thinking no longer of us, speaking no more of our weapons,  
 Nor of marching to the sound of bloody alarms.  
 He was like Achilles enchained in pleasure  
 And having become slave of a beautiful woman.  
 I saved him right away from a crime so villainous  
 Which remains eternal if it is not suddenly extinguished.  
 Ask for Sophonisba and claim her as a reward  
 Of triumphant Rome and of the Latin people,  
 And declare that he cannot keep her enslaved  
 Without the rightful permission of our fortunate city.  
 He contends, he disputes, he warns how  
 He had her as his fiancée and had given his word  
 To take her as his wife before his word promised  
 To unfortunate Siphax and before he had taken her.  
 I still dispute and maintain that he cannot  
 Keep her for himself, if, in breaking his faith with us,  
 He does not want to perfidiously to have Rome as an adversary  
 That he felt a thousand times hospitable,  
 Although he was seen to be burning in pain.  
 He resolved, however, to carry out its will,  
 Promising me Sophonisba, and I hoped  
 To see her alive this day in our safe-keeping.  
 Wise, she who has received his pledge  
 In giving herself to him, as to a sacred king,  
 That he would not give her over alive to our custody,  
 For she does not want to see herself captive by our arms.  
 Now he keeps his word; for, seeing himself compelled



De rendre ceste femme et par promesse astraint  
 De la conserver vive en sa liberté sainte,  
 Luy envoie un poison, pour libre en estre estainte.  
 Elle prend ce present comme aide à sa douleur  
 Et pense en son secours terminer son malheur,  
 Appelle Massinisse et juste et veritable  
 De luy faire sentir le trespas honorable,  
 Plustost que la laisser vivante entre nos mains,  
 Pour n'estre point sujette aux superbes Romains.  
 Elle empoigne le vase, ayant fait la priere  
 Aux dieux encontre nous ; d'une constance fiere,  
 D'une audace hardie, et d'une forte main  
 Elle avale à plaisir ce breuvage inhumain  
 Qui consumma sa vie et d'une ardeur cruelle  
 Fist trespasser à coup sa vigueur naturelle.  
 A l'heure Massinisse, en me montrant le corps  
 Qui s'estoit mis au rang des sepulcrales morts,  
 Me dist prens Sophonisbe, emporte-la Lelie,  
 Je la rends aux Romains depouillee de vie.  
 Prens ce corps, si tu veux, dont l'esprit glorieux  
 Pour mespriser la mort est monté dans les cieux.  
 Lors je fus estonné, et regrettant en l'ame  
 Le trespas vertueux d'une si sage dame,  
 J'ordonné que le corps que jadis fut si beau  
 D'une soigneuse main seroit mis au tombeau,  
 En loüant Sophonisbe et rendant mainte gloire

To hand over this woman and bound by a pledge  
 To preserve her life in her holy liberty,  
 He sends her a poison, in order for her to die free.  
 She takes this gift to assuage her sorrow  
 And intends in its care to end her unhappiness;  
 She calls Massinissa, who is both just and true,  
 To have him feel her undergoing an honorable death,  
 Rather than allowing her to live in our hands;  
 In order not to be subject to the arrogant Romans.  
 She seizes the vessel, having said prayers  
 To the gods against us; with a proud steadfastness,  
 With a bold audacity, and with a strong hand  
 She swallows this cruel potion with pleasure  
 Which consumed her life, and with a cruel burning  
 Suddenly extinguished her physical strength.  
 At that time Massinissa, upon showing me the body  
 Which had been placed among the sepulchers of the dead,  
 Told me "take Sophonisba, take her Lelius,  
 I render her to the Romans stripped of life.  
 Take this body, if you wish, whose glorious spirit  
 Has ascended to the heavens in order to scorn death."  
 Then I was amazed, and regretting in spirit  
 The virtuous death of so wise a lady,  
 I decreed that the body which was formerly so beautiful  
 Would be put into the tomb with a caring hand,  
 In praising Sophonisba, and in rendering much

Perdurable à jamais à sa belle mémoire.

Voilà comme elle est morte invaincue et comment

Massinisse envers nous a gardé son serment.

Scipion

J'approuve ceste mort en assurance unique

Et envié l'honneur de la parjure Affrique,

D'avoir jadis nourry un esprit si hautain

Qui meritoit de naistre et de mourir Romain.

O rare Sophonisbe, une gloire honorable

Est due à ton trespas qui n'a point de semblable.

O courageuse femme, exemple de vertu

Dont l'esprit n'a esté de frayeur combatu

En regardant le font de la mort qui cruelle,

En te faisant mourir, te fait vivre immortelle.

J'envye ta vertu, et bien qu'en majesté,

En grandeur, en pouvoir, mon triomphe eust esté

Plus superbe cent fois en te menant servile

Dans Rome des citez la plus superbe ville,

Je n'ay regret pourtant que ton cœur indomté

Par une belle mort ait ce mal évité.

Si des fils desloyaux de la palle Cartage

Telle estoit la vertu et pareil le courage,

Everlasting glory to her beautiful memory.

There she is dead, unconquered, and see how

Massinissa has kept his word to us.

Scipio

I commend this death with complete assurance

And begrudging the honor of Africa's breach of oath,

For having once fed so lofty a spirit

Which deserved to be born and to die Roman.

Oh excellent Sophonisba, an honorable glory

Is owed to your death which has no other likeness.

Oh brave woman, example of virtue

Whose embattled spirit knew no fear

In glimpsing the fountain of death which, cruel,

In killing you, makes you immortal.

I envy your virtue, and although in majesty,

In grandeur, and in power, my triumph had been

One hundred times prouder in leading you into servitude

In Rome the proudest of all cities,

I do not, however, have any regret that your indomitable heart

Has avoided this ill through a beautiful death.

If such was the virtue and similarly the courage

Of the disloyal sons of wan Carthage,

Ils seroyent nos vaincueurs, puisque mesme en la mort

Brave tu as domté nostre guerrier effort.

O royne genereuse et qui sans estre esclave

As voulu trespasser heureuse, libre et brave,

Quels honneurs seront-ils dignes d'estre voüez

A tes os de l'oubly par le ciel conservez,

A ton nom, à ta gloire, et qui à suffisance

Peut honorer assez ta guerriere constance ?

O royne venerable, en ravissant tes jours,

Tu nous ravis aussi l'honneur de nos estours,

Le los de nos combats, et la gloire plus belle

Qui assista nos fers durant nostre querelle.

Bref, tu nous ravis tout, le ravissant à toy,

Fors ton piteux regret qui nous comble d'esmoy.

Or allons, Scipion, honorant la memoire

De cet acte parfait qui passe nostre gloire.

Imitons-le en vivant, et nous deviendrons dieux,

Si nous sommes autant braves et courageux

Que Sophonisbe fut dont la mort sans pareille

En celeste vertu nous remplist de merveilles.

Or sus, honorons-la, estimans bienheureux

Siphax d'avoir jouy d'un bien si precieux.

They would be our conquerors, since even in brave death

You have conquered our efforts in war.

Oh generous queen who, without being a slave,

Wanted to die happy, free, and courageous,

What honors will be worthy of being devoted

Unto your bones preserved by the heavens from oblivion,

To your name, to your glory, and which sufficiently

Can give honor enough to your warlike steadfastness?

Oh venerable queen, in snatching away your days,

You also snatched away the honor of our struggles,

The praise of our battles and the most beautiful glory

Which assisted our swords during our combat.

In sum, you snatched from us everything, taking it all for yourself,

Except for your piteous regret which fills us with sorrow.

Now let us go, Scipio, honoring the memory

Of this perfect deed which surpasses our glory.

Let us imitate it in living, and we will become gods,

If we are as brave and courageous

As Sophonisba was, whose death, without parallel

In celestial virtue, has filled us with marvels.

Now arise, let us honor her, esteeming very fortunate

Siphax for having rejoiced with such a precious gift.



## Siphax

O courte des mortels ceste fragile vie  
 Que le ciel leur relaisse à cent maux asservie !  
 O court le temps aislé de leurs lentes saisons  
 Sujettes aux malheurs, aux cruelles poisons,  
 A l'effort du destin, au sort, et à la parque  
 Qui parmy ces travaux nostre constance attaque.  
 Nostre vie ressemble à l'ombre qui finist  
 Soudain que le Soleil à nos yeux se ternist.  
 Elle passe en un rien, et un seul ne s'assure  
 De vivre seulement le tiers d'une seule heure.  
 Ore morts, ore vifs, on nous trouve icy-bas  
 Joüets de la fortune et butins du trespas.  
 Les rois ne sont exempts de ce mortel bre[u]vage.  
 En l'avallant plustost, plus ils ont de courage.  
 Ils meurent malheureux ; leur royale grandeur  
 Ne les exempte pas de ce commun malheur.  
 Nostre vie est semblable à la fleur expandue  
 Sur qui l'on n'a si tost jetté la douce veüe,  
 Admirant sa beauté q'un vent injurieux,  
 L'envoyant en esclats, ne l'arrache à nos yeux.  
 Aussi passe leger le cours de nostre vie,

## Siphax

Oh, may heaven free them from this short fragile life of mortals  
 Enslaved by a hundred afflictions!  
 Oh short the winged time of their slow seasons  
 Subject to misfortune, to cruel poisons,  
 To the labor of destiny, to fate, and to death  
 Which among these labors attacks our steadfastness.  
 Our life resembles a shadow which has suddenly  
 Ended and that the Sun dulls in our eyes.  
 It passes into nothing, and a single being is not assured  
 Of living even for one third of a single hour.  
 Now dead, now alive, one finds us down here  
 Playthings of fortune and spoils of death.  
 Kings are not exempt from this fatal potion.  
 Rather in swallowing it, they have greater courage.  
 They die unhappy; their royal grandeur  
 Does not exempt them from this common misfortune.  
 Our life is similar to a scattered flower  
 Upon which one did not cast a fond glance soon enough,  
 Admiring its beauty that harmful wind,  
 Carrying it in bits and plucking it from our eyes.  
 So quickly passes the course of our life,

Et nostre vigueur est en un moment ravie.

Sophonisbe le sçait dont le corps, abatu

Par l'outrageuse mort, est ores sans vertue,

Sans chaleur, sans audace et qui roine naguere

N'est plus que le butin d'un tombeau mortuaire.

Roine elle fust vraiment, roine elle est par sa fin,

Puisqu'elle a commandé au sort et au destin,

Regi la palle mort et sans craindre sa face

Bravé superbement son outrageuse audace.

O belle Sophonisbe, encore que tu sois

Cause de tant de maux qui trançonnoient ma voix,

Ma vie, et mon repos et qu'à ton doux langage

J'aye commis le mal qui me traine en servage,

Si suis-je bienheureux d'avoir eu comme mien

Un cœur si genereux comme a paru le tien.

O roine vertueuse et de qui la belle ame

Fut d'un homme royal, non d'une foible femme,

Tu es morte invaincue et en ta liberté,

Où je me voy chetif en servage arrêté.

Au prix du fier malheur que traverse ma vie,

Ton repos bienheureux insollument j'envie

Et souhaite un trespas qui pareil à ta mort

And the vigor of our lives is snatched away in a moment.

So knows Sophonisba whose body, beaten down

By outrageous death, and is now limp,

Cold, inert, and who not long ago was queen

Is no longer anything but the spoil of a funereal tomb.

She was truly queen, she is queen to the very end,

Since she commanded fate and destiny,

Ruled over pallid death and without fearing its face

Proudly braved its heinous presumption.

Oh beautiful Sophonisba although you may be

The cause of so many evils which shattered my voice,

My life, and my peace, and although, at your gentle language,

I have committed evil which drags me into slavery,

If I am happy to have had as mine

A heart so generous as yours appeared.

Oh virtuous queen and whose beautiful soul

Was that of a royal man, not that of a weak woman,

You have died unconquered and in your liberty,

Whereas I see myself wretched and enchained in slavery.

At the price of proud misfortune that spans my life,

I envy very much your very fortunate rest

And wish for a passing away like your death,

Me vange du courroux de l'infidelle sort.

O trespas bienheureux où la gloire plus belle

Avec le doux repos se remonstre eternelle !

O glorieux tombeau qui ravis<sup>12</sup> au destin

Celle qui pour t'avoir bravé avance sa fin,

Que ne suis-je dans toy enfermé de la sorte

Que celle que tu tiens de vie seule morte,

Et non du vif honneur, puisqu'il passe au travers

De ta froide espaisseur et court par l'univers ?

Roine, je ne te plains, puisque tu es exemple

De l'outrageux malheur qui cruel me tourmente,

Mais je plains mon destin dont la cruelle loy

Cruel ne m'a permis de mourir quand et toy

Comme j'avois vescu avecque toy fidelle

Qui mollissois l'ardeur de ma paine cruelle.

Mais puisque le destin ce bien ne m'a permis

Et qu'il faut que je meure entre mes ennemis,

Esclave miserable, il faut que je soupire,

Et qu'à pleindre mon mal tous les mortels j'atire.

O mortels, contemplez en mon sort inhumain

L'infortune des rois et l'estat incertain

Des choses de la terre. Ah, voyez qu'en peu d'heure

Avenges me from the wrath of unfaithful fate.

Oh very happy death where the most beautiful glory

Is eternally set out with gentle rest before our eyes!

Oh glorious tomb which rips away from destiny

She who, having endured you, marches to her end,

Am I not entombed within you in such a way

As she, whom, only dead, you hold to be alive,

And you do not respect her living honor, since it passes

From your cold thickness and runs through the universe?

Queen, I do not fault you, since you are an example

Of the outrageous misfortune which cruelly torments me,

But I bemoan my destiny whose cruel law

Has cruelly forbade me from dying along with you

As I have lived faithfully with you

Who assuaged the burning of my cruel pain.

But since destiny has not allowed me this fortune,

And since I must die among my enemies,

As a miserable slave, I must sigh,

And draw all mortals to bemoan my affliction.

Oh mortals, meditate on my monstrous fate

The misfortune of kings and the state of uncertainty

Of earthly things. Ah, see that shortly



Il faut qu'avecque vous vostre puissance meure,

Que vous soyez butins d'un sepulcral tombeau,

Mesmes le plus souvent en vostre aage<sup>13</sup> plus beau

Comme l'est Sophonisbe, elle dont le courage

Tint les superbes rois autrefois en servage,

Qui brida leur vouloir, força leur liberté,

Disposant de leur sort selon sa volonté.

Ores elle est esteinte ; une poison mortelle

En un rien a transi ceste vertu si belle.

Elle est morte en sa fleur ; un sepulcre vouté

S'esjouist aujourd'huy de sa riche beauté.

Elle a finy ses jours d'une mort inhumaine,

Et la mort n'a douté son audace hautaine.

Elle est morte, et je vis esclave infortuné,

Bien que pour commander je fusse destiné,

Que je fusse né roy ; ainsi fortune adverse

Les estats et les rois cruellement renverse.

Your power must die with you,

That you must be the spoils of a funereal tomb,

Even the most frequent, in your more beautiful age,

As is Sophonisba, she whose courage

At one time held proud kings in bondage,

Who ruled their wants, violated their freedom,

Disposing of their fate according to her wishes.

Now her life is extinguished; a fatal poison

Has ended and changed such a beautiful virtue into nothingness.

She has died in her bloom; an arched sepulcher

Today celebrates her rich beauty.

She has finished her days with a barbarous end,

And her haughty boldness did not dread death.

She is dead, and I live, an unfortunate slave,

Though I was destined to command,

I was born king; hence adverse fortune

Cruelly overturns kings and their domains.

FIN

THE END

### Notes on the Translation

<sup>1</sup>Here, the tense is present indicative in the second person, therefore there should be an “s” at the end of “imite,” however Stone’s edition omits this “s.”

<sup>2</sup>See note 1. There is an “s” missing from the end of “manque.”

<sup>3</sup>Here, in the third person, “meurs” should be “meurt.”

<sup>4</sup>Ambiguous meaning. The use of “en” plus the present participle could mean “while” or “by,” thus resulting in two possible interpretations.

<sup>5</sup>“Vis” could be the past or present tense of “to live.” Thus we again have two possible interpretations.

<sup>6</sup>Missing “s” at the end of “sente.”

<sup>7</sup>A satisfactory translation of the word “tin” could not be found. It means “tingling,” but this definition does not make sense in this context.

<sup>8</sup>Missing “s” at the end of “enferme.”

<sup>9</sup>The Fates, three female personifications of destiny in Greek mythology.

<sup>10</sup>In this context “vois” can either mean “to see” or “to go.”

<sup>11</sup>Dido was the founder and first queen of Carthage according to the Greeks and Romans. The legend of Dido to which Montreux is referring here, however, is not Virgil’s, but rather Boccace’s.

<sup>12</sup>Though “ravis” is given, the correct spelling in this case is “ravit.”

<sup>13</sup>The circumflex was rarely used in written French during this time period, instead the vowel was repeated, thus this unusual spelling of “âge” is correct.

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